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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QURAN.

By DR. GUSTAV WEIL.

Translated from the second edition, with notes and references to the Quran and to other authorities, by Professor Frank K. Sanders, Ph.D. and Harry W. Dunning, B.A., of Yale University.

PART SECOND—CONTINUED.

X. *The suras uttered at Medina.*—The twenty-three remaining suras belong to Medina, and may be more definitely apportioned, for their chronological order can be more exactly determined. According to the general opinion Sura 2 (the Heifer) is the first Medina sura, because Muhammad at first certainly could have no more important care than to win the numerous and influential Jews, and with the more reason because he had frequently appealed to Jewish testimony while at Mecca.¹ This, after a polemic against idolaters² and then against hypocrites, is the subject of a large part of this sura. He shows the Jews from their own history how they were ever lacking in true faith, even when Moses was with them; and contrasts the nature religion of Abraham with the inflexible Mosaic system and with the dogmatism of Christianity. He recognizes no forbidden food except blood, carrion,³ pork, and meat which has been offered to idols, a prohibition appearing even in Meccan suras in connection with those against various other heathen customs in vogue at Mecca.⁴ Moreover, at first he proclaims no command except belief in God, angels, the resurrection, prophets and their revelations, charity towards the poor,⁵ orphans, relatives, travelers and slaves, prayer, fulfilment of

¹ Note especially Sura 10:94: "If thou art in doubt of that which we have sent down unto thee, ask those who read the Book before thee," and Sura 26:197, "Have they not a sign in that the learned men of Israel recognize it." Cf. also Suras 28:52, 53; 46:9; 87:18, 19.

² According to Weil some verses of this class may have been revealed in Mecca.

³ Verse 168. Compare also Sura 5:4.

⁴ Suras 6:146; 16:116.

⁵ In regard to the manner of almsgiving see verses 264 ff.

promise and patience in misfortune. There is no mention of a particular position while praying, "God is lord of the east and of the west."¹ These general precepts which Muhammad revealed at the beginning of his stay at Medina were followed by other laws during the second year. While at first it was the rule that no one should be forced to believe,² now war against unbelievers was commanded, and even permitted during the sacred months.³ No one was required to encounter too great danger,⁴ prayer in such cases being permitted while riding or walking, although in general it had to be made while standing and kneeling.⁵ Mecca was appointed as the place towards which one should turn in prayer.⁶ Wine and games of chance, if not directly forbidden, were at least frowned upon.⁷ The month Ramadhan was proclaimed a month of fasting.⁸ Some sanitary, civil, and criminal laws were also given at this time, relating to the purification of women,⁹ wills, notes,¹⁰ usury,¹¹ divorce, women's rights,¹² marriage with unbelievers,¹³ and murder.¹⁴ Verses 153 and 192-200, which contain the rules for the pilgrimage, certainly belong to a later period, probably to the sixth or seventh year of the Hijra.

Sura 98, which is especially directed against unbelieving Jews and Christians, probably is contemporaneous with the second and merely supplementary to it. So also Sura 62, which contains the regulations for the religious observances on Friday, but in the beginning has a tirade against Jews and Christians, in almost the same words as Sura 2.¹⁵

Sura 65 is partly a repetition and partly an amplification of the laws relating to marriage in the second sura, and must therefore be assigned to about the same time. Sura 22, which

¹ Compare verses 109 and 172.

⁴ Verse 191.

² Verse 257.

⁵ Verse 240.

³ Verses 186-190, also 214.

⁶ Verses 136-139.

⁷ Verse 216. In a later passage, 5:92, 93, the enjoyment of wine is absolutely forbidden. Compare also 4:46.

⁸ Verse 181 ff.

¹² *I. e.*, marital regulations, *cf.* v. 226 ff.

⁹ Verse 222.

¹³ Verse 220.

¹⁰ Verse 283.

¹⁴ Verse 173.

¹¹ Verse 276.

¹⁵ Compare 62:6-8 with 2:96-98.

contains the first permission to carry on war¹ and deals with the institution of the pilgrimage by Abraham² and with the reward awaiting the refugee³ who dies or is killed,⁴ belongs to this time; but, even according to Muslims, a part of it had already appeared at Mecca, for it contains more invectives against the idolaters of Mecca than against the inhabitants of Medina, and verses 53-55, in which Muhammad retracts a concession which he had made to unbelievers and ascribes an earlier revelation to the artifices of Satan, leave no doubt of this fact.

A large part of Sura 4 belongs to the oldest Medina period. It contains more marriage laws and laws of inheritance⁵ connected therewith; and, in addition, regulations regarding accidental homicide,⁶ some commands to war, especially for the release of believers retained in Mecca,⁷ invectives against idolaters, Jews and Christians,⁸ rules for prayer in war and purification before it, which, to be sure, according to Muslim tradition is of later date, and, finally, some general moral exhortations,—munificence without ostentation,⁹ honesty, and love of truth.¹⁰

The eighth sura undoubtedly appeared shortly after the battle of Badr, which is treated in detail therein. It contains mere repetitions of the call to war, and has no new matter except that pertaining to the division of the booty. Verse 73, which establishes the laws of inheritance between the refugees and helpers, which is again brought up in Sura 76, was brought out earlier, soon after Muhammad's arrival in Medina, when he established brotherhood between the citizens and refugees. On the contrary,

¹ Verse 40.

² Verse 27 ff.

³ (Muhâjir)—a technical term for those inhabitants of Mecca who fled to Medina to join Muhammad. These held the highest rank in Islam. Muhammad distinguishes classes of believers thus: *companions* (ṣahâbat)—those genuine believers who were converted during the life of the prophet and had actually seen him face to face; *helpers* (*anṣâr)—those converts from Medina through whose efforts the city of Medina gave allegiance to Muhammad: afterwards applied to all inhabitants of Medina; *hypocrites* (munâfiq)—residents of Medina openly professing Islam but secretly disaffected.

⁴ Verse 57.

⁸ Verses 152, 169, 170.

⁵ Verses 1-32, 126-129, 175.

⁹ Verse 41 ff.

⁶ Verse 94.

¹⁰ Cf. 33:47 and 2:5.

⁷ Verse 77.

verse 68, in which the sparing of the prisoners at Badr is reprehended, may have appeared after the defeat at Uhud, which was ascribed to this mistake.

Probably Sura 47 comes next to Sura 8. Its principal subject is likewise the requirement to fight against unbelievers, and, like verse 68 of Sura 8, the fourteenth verse says that they must be crushed, and only after complete defeat is it allowable to take ransom for prisoners or to grant quarter to them.

Sura 57 can be placed, with reference to general contents, soon after Muhammad's arrival at Medina. Many indeed erroneously regard it as a Meccan sura, and ascribe Umar's conversion to it. However, we think that it appeared shortly after the battle of Badr, because verse 10 reads: "Not alike amongst you is he who gives alms before the victory [over the unbelievers] and fights; they are grander in rank than those who give alms afterwards and fight." It is certain that Muhammad first made such a distinction after this battle; furthermore verse 13 treats of the hypocrites, who appear first at Medina.

Sura 3, or, at any rate, a portion of it, was brought out to comfort the Muslims for the loss at Uhud, and therefore it must have appeared in the third year of the Hijra. The rest of it, made up partly of invectives against the Jews and Christians, and partly of friendly advances towards them, with reference to their belief in Abraham, may be older. On the other hand, verse 79, which eternally condemns all non-Muslims, certainly was later.

As the battle of Uhud determines the time of Sura 3, so the expulsion of the Banu Nadhir, which took place in the third month of the fourteenth year of the Hijra, determines Sura 59, a part of which appeared during the attack on their strongholds, and the rest soon after their surrender. It contains no law except that authorizing Muhammad's distribution, at his own pleasure, of booty obtained without a battle. The last seven verses may have been revealed earlier.

Suras 24 and 63, according to their principal contents, refer to the campaign against the Banu Mustalik, or rather to the events on the return. The date given for this campaign varies from

the fourth to the sixth year of the Hijra. However, it was most probably in the fifth year. Sura 63 contains the mutinous words which the hypocrites under the leadership of Abd Allah Ibn Ubajj addressed to Muhammad on the occasion of a quarrel between a man of Mecca and a foreigner residing in Medina.

Sura 24 contains the adventure of Ayisha, with which is connected the punishment for a false accusation of adultery, and in addition several precepts concerning domestic life, the chastity of both men and women, and the veiling and divorce of the latter. Some pertain especially to Muhammad's harem, which is said to have been kept more strictly than that of the other believers. According to biographical sources, the law concerning the oath of purity¹ appeared later, when Uwaimar, who had accompanied the campaign of Tabuk, found his wife pregnant on his return. This sura contains no other law except one about slaves² whose emancipation is to be made easy in every way by their masters.

Some months after the above-mentioned campaign, the siege of Medina took place. Sura 33 deals with this and also with the war against the Banu Quraiza, which followed almost immediately. Therefore there can be no doubt concerning the time of this sura, for although the passages in which the occurrence is mentioned may have appeared later, those, nevertheless, which refer to Muhammad's marriage with Zainab,³ which was celebrated shortly before the campaign against the Banu Mustalik, must have appeared shortly after it. Only a portion of the regulations concerning Muhammad's harem were brought out earlier, as Ayisha's story of her escapade shows. On the contrary, the reproaches which Muhammad showers upon his wives⁴ belong to a later time, and the verse which forbids Muhammad to marry other women or to take others in place of his legal wives⁵ must certainly have appeared in his last years.

Verse 48, which allows a summary divorce in case a marriage has not been consummated, certainly belongs to the "Sura of

¹ Verses 6-9.

⁴ Verses 28-33.

² Verse 33.

⁵ Verse 52.

³ Verses 1-5 and 36-40.

Divorce" (Sura 65) and shows us clearly how Zaid set about his work of compilation. This verse was apparently revealed later than the rest of Sura 65 for some especial occasion, and fell into the hands of Zaid when he was engaged on the thirty-third sura. Verses 44-47, if they do not belong to a Meccan sura, at any rate appeared early at Medina. It was certainly revealed at a time when as yet no war was permitted, for in verse 47 it says: "Do not follow the unbelievers and hypocrites, and do no harm to them, but trust in God."

Sura 48 belongs to the unsuccessful pilgrimage, or to the campaign of Hudaibiya. It describes the treaty with the Meccans as a conquest, and mentions the immediately following war of Khaibar. The three verses which form the 110th sura probably appeared at this time, if not right after the conquest of Mecca. So, likewise, appeared a part of Sura 61, especially verse 13, where, as in Sura 48, a rapid conquest is promised, and verses 1-4, which reproach the believers for not keeping their word. This probably refers to those who would not take part in the campaign against Mecca, which Muhammad hoped would be much more imposing, so that if necessary an entrance to Mecca could be obtained by force. Sura 60 dissolves the marriage between believers and unbelievers, and therefore belongs immediately after the return from Hudaibiya. It also prescribes the formula of submission for women. The first part of this sura must have appeared shortly before the conquest, when Hatib Ibn Baltaa wished to notify his friends in Mecca of Muhammad's purpose. However, the command not to take unbelievers for friends is so often repeated that it probably had been brought out earlier, for Muhammad had long since wished that there should be no friendly relations with the unbelievers.

According to Muslim tradition, Sura 58, in which the heathen formula of divorce, "Be thou to me as the back of my mother," is declared to be nonsense and the form of atonement for such an expression is given, was revealed just after the campaign of Hudaibiya. But the fourth verse of Sura 33 speaks of the same subject, and this, as has been shown, was revealed soon

after his marriage with Zainab, and therefore we think that Sura 58 is contemporaneous.¹

Sura 49, the first part of which deals with the behavior of the representatives of the Thaqiſtes, appeared after the conquest of Mecca. In the following verses Muhammad seeks to restore harmony between the victors and vanquished, and warns them against distrust, suspicion, eaves-dropping, slander and haughtiness, for these vices would probably produce discord among the believers who ought to live like brothers.

After the campaign of Tabuk appeared Sura 66, which treats of the adventure with the Coptess Mary, and the greater part of Sura 9,² which is especially directed against those who took no part in this campaign, and against other hypocrites for whom funeral prayers are henceforth not to be said. The campaign of Hunain is mentioned therein, and also the mosque which the hypocritical Banu Amir had built. The new and stricter constitutional laws which Ali was ordered to promulgate before the pilgrims at the end of the ninth year of the Hijra form the beginning of this sura. But the two last verses probably belong to a Meccan sura, and Zaid Ibn Thabit himself maintains, according to a tradition in which the before-mentioned method of collecting the Quran is narrated, that he found these two verses last. Probably he then added them to the ninth sura, which, as a whole, is chronologically the last.

The fifth sura contains several verses which Muhammad brought out on his last pilgrimage, and therefore some Muslims consider it the last. These are the verses referring to the pilgrimage, and some laws about food, especially those repeated and further elaborated in the fourth verse, on account of the following statement that his religious teachings are now complete. The second and third verses were revealed earlier. The command to use sand³ when water is unobtainable occurs in an earlier sura, and, according to Muslim tradition, is of older date. Likewise

¹ The rest of this Sura contains only generalities concerning belief in Muhammad and the reverence due him as an apostle of the Lord.

² Verses 13-24 belong before the conquest of Mecca.

³ Verse 9.

the regulation concerning the atonement for an unfulfilled oath¹ points back to Sura 66, verse 2.

The law that a will must be signed by two witnesses² probably appeared earlier, some time after verse 176 of Sura 2. The same is true of the reproof against drinking and gambling.³ But the law which punishes theft by cutting off the hand may have been given during the last pilgrimage, if we here, as in many other places, reject Muslim tradition, according to which this law was already in use. The rest of this sura contains some biblical legends, invectives against Jews and idolaters, and especially against the Christians and their doctrine of the Trinity. It is certainly older. Verse 85 proves this, for it calls the Christians friends of the Muslims, which could not have been said after the battle of Muta or the campaign of Tabuk, and verse 73 in which, like verse 61 of Sura 2, faithful Jews and Christians are promised a happy future life, while Sura 3 says,⁴ "Whoever craves other than Islam for a religion, it shall surely not be accepted from him, and he shall in the next world be of those who lose." So, also, Sura 48, verse 13, "Whoever believes not in God and his apostle, for such unbelievers we have prepared a blaze." We cannot suppose that Muhammad became more tolerant towards Jews and Christians, for he even forbade them to tread the territory of Mecca.

XI. *A Shiite sura*.—We close this section with a sura from the Quran translated by Garcin de Tassy, from a Persian work entitled *Dabistan-i-Madsahib*. Before his time this sura was not only unknown in Europe, but there was no suspicion whatever that there was any doubt among Muslims as to the integrity of the Quran. But we learn in Garcin de Tassy's introduction to this sura that the Shiites or adherents of Ali and his descendants accuse the Sunnites, that is the defenders of the rights of the first three caliphs, of altering not only the oral teachings of the prophet, but even the holy text itself, and throwing out all

¹ Verse 91.

² Verses 105-7.

³ Verses 92, 93. He refers especially to the game of chance, called El Maisar, played with arrows. Cf. also Sura 2:216.

⁴ Verse 79.

passages in favor of Ali. But the following sura, despite the efforts of Uthman to destroy all copies of the Quran not in agreement with his recension, was preserved in some unknown way. No positive assertion can be made regarding its genuineness.

“In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. O ye believers! Believe on the two lights which we have sent down to you to expound to you my verses and to warn you of the torment of the terrible day,—two lights, one of which has generated the other.¹ Certainly we hear and know everything. Those who hold to the alliance between God and his apostle, according to my verses, will possess gardens of delight, but those who apostatize from their belief and break their compact with God and his apostle will be cast into hell. They have injured themselves and been disobedient to the command of (God’s) apostle, these shall drink boiling water. God, who illumines the heavens and the earth according to his will and selects angels and apostles, has appointed those (Muhammad and Ali?) to the believers among his creatures. God does what he will; there is no God but he, the merciful, the compassionate. People before this have been faithless towards their apostles, but I have punished them for their faithlessness and my punishment is severe and painful. God destroyed Ad and Thamud on account of their deeds and made them a warning to you; will you not fear him? Pharaoh ill-treated Moses and Aaron but I engulfed him and his followers, that they might be a sign to you. Most of you are profligate; on the resurrection day God will assemble such. They will be unable to answer the questions asked them and will be condemned to dwell in hell. God is all-knowing, all-wise. O apostle! Think of my threats! Some day they will be manifest. Those who turn from my words will perish. They are not like those who hold fast to your compact. I will reward the latter with a garden of delights. God is rich in favor and reward. Surely Ali is one of the God-fearing; we will show him justice on the judgment day. We indeed know that injustice will befall him (we have exalted him above thy entire family); he and his descendants must endure patiently and their enemy is the chief

¹ The Shiites speculatively regard Ali as a part of Muhammad.

of sinners. Say to those who are backsliding from their faith : Ye desire the pleasures of this world and exert yourselves to obtain them and forget what God and his prophet promise you and break the bond ye have made, although we sought to guide you by many examples. O apostle ! We have sent down the clear verses, which contain a compact. He who holdeth fast thereto is a believer ; he who turns his back upon it after thy death will be destroyed ; turn from these for they are also apostates. Certainly we will again bring them forth on a day when nothing can help them ; then will they find no grace, hell will be assigned them for an eternal dwelling-place. Praise the name of thy Lord and be of those who pray to him. Of old we sent Moses and also Aaron, when he desired an assistant. But they (the Jews) did violence to Aaron, yet his patience was excellent. We changed some of them into asses and swine and cursed them until the day of the resurrection. Have patience ! they will be punished some day. We have given thee equal power with the apostles before thee, and have pointed out to thee some of them as object-lessons (for unbelievers) thereby to convert them. I will bring back at some time whoever turns aside from my commands. See ! they enjoy their unbelief for a short time ; you are not sent to preach for the sake of offenders. O apostle ! we have imposed upon the neck of the faithful a compact with thee ; grasp it and be of the grateful. Surely Ali is pious, he prays by night, fears the next world, and hopes for the reward of his Lord. Speak ! are (such pious people) to be like those who go on carelessly, although they know my punishment ? Their neck will be loaded with chains and they will rue their deeds. We promise you pious descendants who will not be disobedient to our command. I will show them love and favor during their life, and after their death on the day of the resurrection. But I will inflict my anger upon those who injure them after thy death ; they are the impious ones who shall be destroyed. But those who go in their path (thy descendants) find grace with me and security in the gardens of Paradise. Praise be to God, the Lord of the world."